



PRESS RELEASE

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Officials break ground for Tujunga groundwater enhancement

The City of Los Angeles and the County of Los Angeles are working together on a project that will save more than five billion gallons of water a year at a new stormwater capture facility now under construction in the northeast San Fernando Valley.

Mayor Eric Garcetti, LA City Councilmember Nury Martinez, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works today broke ground on the Tujunga Spreading Grounds Enhancement Project — a \$29 million expansion of an existing facility that will double its capacity to capture stormwater for local use.

“We have to expand our local water supply, and that means investing in stormwater capture,” said Mayor Garcetti. “The Tujunga Spreading Grounds Enhancement Project will double the amount of water we capture at this facility — an important step toward securing L.A.’s future in this historic drought. I’m grateful to our County partners for working with us to conserve and capture a precious resource.”

The Tujunga project is designed and managed by LA County Public Works. The department operates 14 major dams and 26 spreading grounds on behalf of the LA County Flood Control District, including the Tujunga Spreading Grounds facility.

The San Fernando Groundwater Basin is the LA area’s greatest water asset, officials said.

Currently, the Tujunga Spreading Grounds can capture and store about 8,000 acre-feet, or 2.5 billion gallons of water a year. Once the enhancement is complete in 2018, that capacity will expand to 16,000 acre-feet, or 5 billion gallons — enough water to supply 48,000 Los Angeles-area households every year. In addition to conserving water, the enhancement will provide new open space and a walking path for neighborhood residents. Work plans include conveyor belts to reduce dust and traffic congestion by keeping trucks off local neighborhood streets during construction.

“In the past, most stormwater was allowed to run off to the Pacific Ocean. Those days are over,” said LADWP General Manager David Wright. “With the Tujunga Spreading Grounds Enhancement Project, we ensure that these valuable water resources don’t go to waste.”

The enhancement is part of LADWP's Stormwater Capture Master Plan, which aims to expand Los Angeles' local water supply and reduce the city's reliance on imported water, Garcetti said. It also advances several of the objectives outlined in LA's Sustainable City pLAn, including the goal of increasing local stormwater capture to 150,000 acre-feet per year by 2035.

LADWP plans to continue implementing stormwater capture projects that reduce the amount of runoff lost to the ocean and make more local water available. These projects include large-scale spreading grounds enhancements like the Tujunga enhancement, as well as smaller projects like green streets, rain gardens, and rain barrels.

"Capturing stormwater to recharge local groundwater supplies has always been part of the Flood Control District's mission," said Gail Farber, director of LA County Public Works. "The severity of the current drought and the challenges of climate change, population growth and an unreliable imported water supply, require the combined attention and effort of the entire region. The City of Los Angeles has been a fantastic partner in this regard."

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